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OF

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FOR

RECORDING FACTS AND ANECDOTES

RELATING TO

QUADRUPEDS, BIRDS, REPTILES, FISHES AND INSECTS.

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The Death of Species. By EDWARD NEWMAN.

"Il ne change qu'en mourant."

(Continued from S. S. 1395.)

CHAPTER III.—ON THE DECAY OF THOSE HUMAN RACES WHICH INHABIT THE SHORES OF THE MEDITERRANEAN.

IT will have been observed that the races to which I alluded in the previous chapter, the Guanches, the Newfoundlanders, the Tasmanians, the Australians, the Red Indians, have left us no legacies in the shape of books, buildings, statues or paintings; and certainly will leave us none, although some of them may yet exist for centuries. Their history, such as it is, must be written by aliens; some, as we have seen, enthusiastic friends, others as decided enemies: and it may be observed that races which could not make any mark to show where they had been, are not likely to be so highly esteemed by posterity as those who have written a history with their own hands. The races who have done this are now to be considered, and we shall see whether arts and arms, the highest intellectual power, or the most wonderful prowess in war, can prolong existence, or serve in any degree as a means of escape from the reign of law. It seems desirable in this, and also in the following chapter, in which I shall treat exclusively of the existent and widely-scattered Jews, Kelts and Saxons, to abandon the word "species," leaving it to be resumed hereafter: I do so under the impression that any word or phrase implying a foregone conclusion, while the inquiry is still pending, savours too much of that false logic which is appropriately called "begging the question." I admit, indeed lament, that other terms in ordinary use, such as "race," "family," "nation," "tribe," &c., are vague to a fault, but I infinitely prefer the vague to the dogmatic.

I trust I have shown in the preceding chapters that species of animals, exactly the same as individual animals, and races of men, exactly the same as individual men, have submitted, because they could do no other, to the law of death: I think it will be an equally easy task to show that other races of men have submitted, also because they could do no other, to the operation of that law in the depauperation, degeneration, deterioration, which is the unmistakable evidence of eventual dissolution. Mr. Darwin fully admits the existence of dead or dying branches of the universal tree of animal and plant life; but

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he evidently regards such dead and dying branches as exceptional, indeed as facts running counter to the general law of evolution; to me they appear the evidence of a law diametrically opposed to that of evolution, namely, the law of death. Who has not felt, when following a member of his family to the grave, that to this end all his family must come at last? and when he observes other members of his family growing oblivious, gray, toothless, deaf or blind, does he not regard these ailments as unquestionable symptoms of decay—as certain precursors of approaching death? I feel in my own enfeebled body and mind that I am an exemplification of this law; that I am myself one of these

> "Poor human ruins tottering o'er the grave."

Extending the principle from individuals to families, from families to tribes, from tribes to races and nations; from the dead Guanches, Newfoundlanders, Caribs, Tasmanians, Toltecs, and the dying Australian and Red Indian, to the Assyrians, Phœnicians, Ethiopians, Egyptians, Copts, Carthaginians, Greeks, Romans, indeed to the ancient world, his must be a singularly obtuse mental vision that cannot perceive all around him the evidence of approaching dissolution.

If I have not entirely misread and misunderstood all that Messrs. Darwin, Spencer, Huxley, Lubbock, Wallace, Hooker, have written on this most interesting subject, these philosophers, without exception, regard all living beings as gradually, perhaps imperceptibly, progressing towards a better, higher and more perfect state of both mind and body than that which they at present enjoy. I am compelled to include the consideration of both mind and body, because both are introduced by the authors themselves; and if we admit the hypothesis of evolution at all, we shall find it simply impossible to fix the period at which mind first enters into that mysterious compound the creature man: the words "primordial cell," "monad," "protozoon," "zoon," "man," are but so many terms used by Darwinians to express points in a linear series of genetic beings of which perhaps the "primordial cell" may, in their estimation, be the first, and man the last up to the Now of this earth's history. The series is simply an extension of that chain of beings so familiar to us all, great-great-grandfather, great-grandfather, grandfather, father, self; or thus, monad * * whelk * * fish * * monkey * * man. Now most of these able reasoners would, I think, willingly admit that the primordial cell, the first member of the series, had "no soul to be saved," and that the last, the *egomet* or self of the series, has an immortal spirit: it follows that at some point or other in the chain of beings this great change must have taken place. This vital question does not appear to have been considered by our Darwinian philosophers, but in the ascending graduated scale it seems pretty clear that the protozoon must be an inhabitant of earth, and man, in his final state, a denizen of heaven.

There is some little appearance of discrepancy in the mode of treating the changes that we have seen in progress. Mr. Darwin speaks of "the innumerable species inhabiting the world as having been modified so as to acquire that perfection of structure and coadaptation which most justly excites our admiration;" but he goes on to say, "Naturalists continually refer to external conditions, such as climate, food, &c., as the only possible cause of variation. In one very limited sense, as we shall hereafter see, this may be true; but it is preposterous to attribute to mere external conditions, the structure, for instance, of the woodpecker, with its feet, tail, beak and tongue so admirably adapted to catch insects under the bark of trees." Wilson Armistead, who so fondly and lovingly dwells on the upward progress of the Negro, attributes, on the other hand, all structural modifications to external causes, setting in array a multitude of instances, in which animals are changed in form, colour, size and economy, by external conditions of latitude and longitude, heat and cold, light and darkness. Mr. Darwin modifies all this, and admits to the full the difficulty of understanding how "a simple being or a simple organ can be changed and perfected into a highly developed being or an elaborately constructed organ;" but he devotes an entire chapter to explain that the change does take place; and he subsequently declares, as a matter established beyond all doubt, that this evolving and improving process is an inherent principle of life, and in no way dependent on externals or casualities, the effects of which he also fairly and dispassionately considers. Near the close of his original work, Mr. Darwin thus expresses himself: "As all the living forms of life are the lineal descendants of those which lived long before the Silurian epoch, we may feel certain that the ordinary succession by generation has never once been broken, and that no cataclysm has desolated the whole world. Hence we may look with some confidence to a secure future of equally inappreciable length. And as natural selection works solely by and for the good of each being, all corporeal and mental endowments will tend to progress towards perfection."—'*Origin of Species*,' p. 489.

I select this from a multitude of parallel passages, because it so distinctly asserts that all living forms of life are descended from ante-Silurian progenitors: now as the Silurian fossils are pentacrinites, trilobites and sea-shells, and as man is a living form of life, this passage could not be rendered more explicit if it positively stated that Newton, Shakespeare and Darwin were lineal descendants of a pentacrinite, a trilobite and a whelk; nor do I suppose Mr. Darwin would for a moment shrink from this somewhat syllogistic mode of stating his own hypothesis. He evidently regards the principle of evolution as acting quite independently of all external conditions whatever, and even as though such external conditions had no existence. Other authors, thoroughly imbued with these views of progress, seem to differ as to their applicability to both "corporeal and mental endowments." Herbert Spencer, one of the most profound thinkers and most lucid writers of our day, thinks that the principle of Natural Selection ensures "a constant progress towards a higher degree of skill, intelligence and self-regulation—a better co-ordination of actions, a more complete life."

Mr. Wallace seems to believe only in this mental progress, this spiritual ascent towards a state we are wont to regard as angelic, for he expresses a most decided opinion that "the body of man has become stationary, and that his future improvement is to be confined to the mind;" and Sir John Lubbock says that "the future happiness of our race, which poets hardly ventured to hope for, Science boldly predicts. Utopia, which we have long looked for as an evident impossibility, which we have ungratefully regarded as too good to be true, turns out, on the contrary, to be the necessary consequence of natural laws, and once more we find that the simple truth exceeds the most brilliant flights of the imagination."—'*Prehistoric Times*,' p. 492.

This reads at first as rather too enthusiastic, but the well-considered paragraph, which I shall next cite from the same accomplished author, may serve as ballast to the very sanguine anticipations here expressed, for we find it sets forth, with the utmost candour, that no progress has been made during the historic period, a period certainly exceeding four thousand years.

"We find on the earliest Egyptian monuments, some of which are certainly as ancient as 2400 B. C., two great distinct types, the Arab on the east and west of Egypt, and the Negro on the south; and the Egyptian type occupying a middle place between the two. The representations on the monuments, although conventional, are so extremely characteristic that it is quite impossible to mistake them. These distinct types still predominate in Egypt and the neighbouring countries. 'Thus, then,' says Mr. Poole, 'in this immense interval we do not find the least change in the Negro or the Arab; and even the type which seems to be intermediate between them is virtually as unaltered. Those who consider that length of time can change a type of man, will do well to consider the fact that three thousand years give no ratio on which a calculation could be founded.' I am, however, not aware that it is supposed by any school of Ethnologists that 'time' alone, without a change of external conditions, will produce an alteration of type. Let us now turn to the instances relied on by Mr. Crawfurd. The millions, he says, 'of African Negroes that have during three centuries been transported to the New World and its islands are the same in colour as the present inhabitants of the parent country of their forefathers. The Creole Spaniards, who have for at least as long a time been settled in tropical America, are as fair as the people of Arragon and Andalusia, with the same variety of colour in the hair and eye as their progenitors. The pure Dutch Creole colonists of the Cape of Good Hope, after dwelling two centuries among black Caffirs and yellow Hottentots, do not differ in colour from the people of Holland.'"

But this is not all: perfectly true it is that the body has exhibited no alteration, and that the mind has not advanced; but is it equally true that the mind has not retrograded? The Negro, Arab and Egyptian are well worthy of examination, but why not extend the inquiry to neighbouring and kindred nations, to the Assyrian, Phœnician, Carthaginian, Roman, Greek? Shall we not find it impossible to deny that in them, indeed in every historic and civilized race, there is evidence of retrogression? I will go a little more into detail.

NEGROES.—I believe our best ethnologists would agree in assigning to the Australasian natives the highest antiquity, and on the principle of evolution we might expect to find them the most advanced in the evidence of mental culture; but history ignores them altogether, so that we are compelled to commence with the Negro. The country of the Cushites, strange as it may appear in the instance of so great a people, has been a subject of doubt and controversy: they certainly travelled northwards in their wonderful invasions of Judæa, and whether from the east or west of the Red Sea matters little to my theory. Herodotus describes two races, Asiatic with straight, and African with woolly, hair. Kitto justly supposes the term Cushite of the Hebrew, Aithiops of the Greek, and Æthiops of the Romans, to be applied to those black people inhabiting the country south of Egypt, and now generally known as Negroes; the word Ethiopian conveys one only meaning, people having a black countenance or skin. The question in Jeremiah, "Can the Cushite change his skin?" implies that he possessed a skin differently coloured from that of the Israelite, and I know of no theory that seems to controvert this point. The Jewish chronicles always represent the Cushites as a most formidable people, a people whose military prowess was equal to their numbers, and whose attacks could only be resisted by the express intervention of the Almighty: it seems to be unhesitatingly admitted that the unaided arm of the Hebrew was totally incompetent to arrest their northward progress, and that the Almighty alone could successfully contend with them. We find in the second book of Chronicles the record of two Negro invasions of Judæa on a scale of magnificence that the Napoleons and Wellingtons of our time might read of with envy. In the fifth year of the reign of king Rehoboam, Shishak, king of Egypt, came up against Jerusalem with twelve hundred war-chariots, and sixty thousand cavalry, and infantry without number; they were Lubims and Sukkiims and Cushites: this army took possession of all the cities of Judæa; it pillaged the temple of Solomon and the palace of Rehoboam, and carried away the shields of gold which Solomon had made: and the children of Israel became the slaves of the Negro: this was a thousand years before the Christian era: the date in the margin is B. C. 972. A second invasion took place about twenty years later under Zerah the Cushite, and in this instance no mention is made of auxiliary forces. Since the previous invasion the Israelites, under Asa, the grandson of Rehoboam, had built and fortified a number of strong cities purposely to resist these formidable invaders: Asa had also raised and disciplined an army of five hundred and eighty thousand men. Such was the prepared state of Judæa when the second great invasion of Negroes took place, when Zerah came up out of Ethiopia with a million of armed Negroes and three hundred war-chariots, and "cattle and sheep and camels in abundance," which shows how thoroughly the Negro then understood the commissariat department; the cattle and sheep being provided for food, the camels for transport. The very simple Scripture narrative conveys the idea of the most consummate organization, the almost boundless resources of the Negro.

Here it has been objected that the numbers used by the Hebrew historian in the books of Chronicles and Kings are greatly exaggerated;

but the text itself does not bear out this: there is a precision in the way in which minor numbers are given that carries conviction to every truth-seeker: thus it is stated that Abijah began to reign in the eighteenth year of king Jeroboam; and that he reigned three years in Jerusalem, and that he had fourteen wives, twenty-two sons and sixteen daughters. It is also worthy of note that the average reign of each king chronicled with so much care correspond very closely with that of the kings of England or European nations generally, showing that the duration of human life was much the same then as now; and the number of wives and children will find its parallel at the present hour in Palestine.

It has been asserted, but never demonstrated, that "Cush" in the Hebrew is not the equivalent of our "Negro;" but I entirely agree with Dr. Kitto in thinking it difficult to understand how any ethnologist could possibly have entertained a different opinion: there is not a single passage in the Bible in which "Cush" cannot be fairly understood to mean Ethiopia; and "Cushite," Negro.

In all ages of the world proficiency in war seems to have been considered the chief good, the great desideratum: it certainly was so in Judæa, and it certainly is so now: our national debts all the world over are incurred with this single object: our expenditure for education, science, art, philanthropy, or in any way for the good of our fellow-creatures, is so infinitessimally small that it bears no appreciable proportion to our expenditure for war: it is therefore, in estimating the character of the Negro three thousand years ago, that I place war first in the category of his accomplishments. But let it not be supposed the Negro of that date was a mere fighter: the city of Meroë, the capital of Ethiopia, to this day contains splendid ruins of temples and other edifices that have excited the admiration and employed the pens of Caillaud, Gau, Ruppell, Belzoni, Waddington, Hoskins, and a host of other accomplished travellers. What is the Negro now, after the lapse of three thousand years? I hear the philanthropist reply that slavery has degraded him; but is this shown by fact? What is the testimony of those outspoken opponents of slavery, Baker, Livingstone, Speke, Grant, Petherick? they have rendered themselves perfectly familiar with the Negro in his home. Notwithstanding all its horrors, slavery has clothed and taught and fed the Negro, and yet neither in a state of servile bondage nor as a free inhabitant of his native morasses, does he bear a comparison with the Negro of Scripture history: he cannot fight a battle, he cannot build a bridge: with the elephant, the most docile of all animals, at his very doors, he cannot utilize the powers of that invaluable animal. I must not omit this opportunity of expressing my opinion that the horrible system of Negro Slavery has been a perpetual curse to the white man; always lowering his standard of morality; always striking at the root of his Christianity.

EGYPTIANS.—However we may lament the almost entire absence of authentic historic records respecting the Negro, except from the pens of decidedly hostile historians, as Jewish and Egyptian, to both which peoples he was a scourge and terror, we have no such difficulty with his neighbour the Egyptian, who would seem to vie with the Negro, both in antiquity and importance. Herodotus, the father of history, B.C. 450, Thucydides, who lived at the same period, Manetho, the Egyptian priest, B.C. 304, Eratosthenes, a Greek philosopher, B.C. 250, Diodorus Siculus, a Roman of the Augustan age, as well as Ælian, Strabo, Plutarch, Pausanius and Philostratus, seem to have made it their especial mission to corroborate that adamantine record left by the Egyptians themselves in their temples and their hieroglyphics. With the first glimmer of history after the Cimmerian darkness of prehistoric ages, we find Egypt grandly bursting through the gloom. The origin of this people is by some modern historians deduced from a son of Noah, but Bunsen has shown that Menes the Great reigned over Egypt 3555 years before Christ, and therefore 1207 years before the deluge, and that a succession of monarchs occupied the throne from Menes to Cleopatra. Dr. Lepsius, who has devoted an almost incredible amount of learning and industry to the inquiry, assigns to Menes a still more remote date, while Dr. Kitto, the great biblical scholar, is disposed to cut down this wonderful antiquity, in order to bring it more in accordance with the chronology of the Bible. This question, deeply interesting though it be, is one for theologians and historians, rather than for the naturalist, to whose particular science it is altogether unimportant whether the Egyptian monarchy was in the zenith of its glory two, three, four or five thousand years before the Christian era. The Bible, a hostile although truthful witness, mentions "Egypt" and "Egyptian" two hundred and fifty times, and there is scarcely a single mention but conveys the idea of vast supremacy. No poet laureate ever penned a pæan of victory with half the force that the book of Exodus describes the expedition of Pharoah in pursuit of the Israelites, and the utter destruction of his host in the Red Sea: "all the chariots of Egypt and captains over every one of them, and all the horses of

Egypt and all the horsemen;" and then the panic that seized the Israelites, and their prayer to Moses that he would return and let them remain the slaves of this mighty people, rather than await the coming of the irresistible force that pursued; and yet this is not written to exalt the Egyptian, but to exhibit, in all its grandeur, the power of the God of Israel.

Thus we find the concurrent testimony of historians, sacred and profane, raising Egypt to the very highest rank of dignity and importance; and did we not know the Egyptian as the creator of pyramids and temples, of Luxor and Carnac, of Philæ and Thebes, of Sphinxes and Memnons, of hieroglyphics, those adamantine histories that have defied the ravages of fire and sword, of Christian cannon and the insatiable appetite of time, no rational doubt could be entertained as to the greatness of a people that filled such diversified histories with their wondrous achievements. But we *do* possess this corroborative evidence, and these stupendous relics of the past still look down on us in serene and imperturbable majesty.

CARTHAGINIANS.—Possessing but a slight, a very slight, knowledge of fiction and romance, it may perhaps amount to very little my saying that I know of no romance so wild and improbable as the brief but authentic history of Carthage. It is a current belief, and has for at least two thousand years been taught in schools, that Carthage was a colony settled by refugees from Tyre: historians find support for this hypothesis in the legendary pages of Theocritus, and philologists in the language they suppose to have been Carthaginian; but real history deals with the subject in no obscure or mythic style; Carthage first illumines the historic page as the possessor of two hundred ships of war, each having five ranks of rowers on each side, and thirty rowers in each rank: thus three hundred oars were dipped simultaneously in the sea, and when we multiply this number by that of the ships, we find that a force of sixty thousand seamen was in constant requisition, and twenty-four thousand fighting men, or marines, were ready for active service on deck, without requiring any assistance from the rowers. Rome, then possessing the opposite shore of the Mediterranean, was the most powerful nation in the world, and it soon became manifest that two such powers could not coexist; neither Rome nor Carthage knew any bounds to her ambition. Carthage very early possessed herself of the greater part of Sicily, and shortly afterwards of all Spain; then came perhaps the most daring military exploit the world has yet witnessed. Hannibal led his victorious troops out of Spain, over the Pyrenees into

France, and then over the Alps into Italy. Rome was thunderstruck at the feat: and her commanders seemed paralyzed with fear: they continued for awhile to hover about the skirts of the Carthaginian army without daring to venture a battle: at last Varro took the field with 80,000 infantry and 6000 cavalry, probably the finest army a Roman general had ever led: the armies met, and the genius of the Carthaginian prevailed: Cannæ was fought and won, and Italy was prostrate at the feet of the Carthaginian, who remained unconquered by Rome, the so-called mistress of the world, for sixteen years. When the Roman at last recovered himself, when his terrific fiat at length went forth, "*delenda est Carthago*," Carthage became a Roman province, and is now but the shadow of a name.

ROMANS.—Where then are the Carthaginians; and where are her conquerors? Does not the very title of Gibbon's great work convey the clearest possible idea of that tribal decay which is directly at variance with evolution, progress, improvement? Gibbon was certainly no Darwinian; he looked on Rome and the Romans as having equally fallen into irretrievable ruin. *Ut nunc omni decore nudata, prostrata jacet, instar gigantei cadaveris corrupti atque undique exesi.*

GREEKS.—The Argives, also called Achaii, Hellenes and Greeks, and sometimes, but erroneously, Acarnanians, have made an impression on the literature of the world which grows deeper, and apparently more enduring, as century after century rolls over our heads. The history of Greece begins a thousand years before the Christian era, and ends or nearly ends with the Birth of Christ. Her warriors, poets, painters and historians still vie with each other as to which has the highest and best claim to the applause of the present age; and while we reckon it our noblest intellectual feat to produce a worthy translation of her poets and historians, or a faithful copy of her statues or temples, we feel an almost breathless admiration of the prowess, skill and indomitable courage which those poets and historians record. Greece first looms on us through the fog of fiction; and the Homeric version of the Greek triumph over the Assyrian race at Troy, is mainly remarkable as evidence of poetic genius: except by a few spirit-rappers, mediums and other impostors, the idea of physical force being employed by gods, demigods and spirits is not now entertained; yet it cannot be denied that the blind poet who imagined these transactions, founded a school or system of theology that made a deep and enduring impression on the minds of men; since we cannot refer the mythology of Greece and Rome to any other or earlier source than the teeming brain of

Homer. Of his transcendent merits it were idle to speak, for one of our own greatest writers has said that "beyond a doubt he was the most exalted and universal genius the world has seen." Subsequent Greek poets, as Æschylus, Aristophanes and others, are so eclipsed and overshadowed by the gigantic genius of Homer, that talent unequalled elsewhere, except perhaps among the Jews, seems dwarfed into insignificance. Of Grecian painters we know little, yet that little is very grand: Apelles lived in the time of Alexander, twenty-one centuries ago, and one of his pictures existed in the age of Augustus, and was purchased by that emperor to adorn the temple of Julius, by the remission of the entire tribute paid by the island of Cos, of which Apelles was a native: the picture was called the Venus Anadyomene, and represented the goddess as emerging from a shell floating on the ocean; but the skill of Apelles was not exhibited alone in painting the human figure, for he painted animals also, and dogs with so great truthfulness that living dogs are said to have supposed them realities, and stopped to quarrel with the inanimate canvas. Of Grecian Sculpture examples still exist, and the names of Phidias and Praxiteles have become synonymous with unrivalled excellence. Of Architecture the Temple of Theseus, and similar buildings which we have despoiled and defaced, still attest the supremacy of Greece. In History the names of Herodotus and Thucydides yet stand unrivalled, and in Astronomy that of Thales: twenty centuries ago that great philosopher calculated eclipses with a precision that induced some to worship him as a god and others to condemn him as a sorcerer. Aristotle has always been called the father of Natural History. Solon, Plato and Socrates are the great teachers of Moral Philosophy. Lastly, in War, the names of Troy and Thermopylæ, of the Granicus, Issus and Arbela, are sufficient evidence of the proficiency of Greece.

What is Greece now?

He who hath bent him o'er the dead
Ere the first day of death is fled,
The first dark day of nothingness,
The last of danger and distress,
(Before decay's effacing fingers
Have swept the lines where beauty lingers,)
And marked the mild angelic air,
The rapture of repose that's there,
The fixed yet tender traits that streak
The languour of the placid cheek,
And—but for that sad shrouded eye,

That fires not, wins not, weeps not, now,
And but for that chill, changeless brow,
When cold obstruction's apathy
Appals the gazing mourner's heart,
As if to him it could impart
The doom he dreads, yet dwells upon;
Yes, but for these and these alone,
Some moments, aye, one treacherous hour,
He still might doubt the tyrant's power;
So fair, so calm, so softly sealed,
The first, last look by death revealed!
Such is the aspect of this shore;
'Tis Greece, but living Greece no more!
So coldly sweet, so deadly fair,
We start, for soul is wanting there.
Hers is the loveliness in death,
That parts not quite with parting breath;
But beauty with that fearful bloom,
That hue which haunts it to the tomb,
Expression's last receding ray,
A gilded halo hovering round decay,
The farewell beam of feeling past away!
Spark of that flame, perchance of heavenly birth,
Which gleams, but warms no more its cherished earth!

Clime of the unforgotten brave!
Whose land from plain to mountain cave
Was Freedom's home or glory's grave!
Shrine of the mighty! can it be,
That this is all remains of thee?

Not all the writings of all the philosophers on earth can impair the lustrous truth of this wonderful passage: and again the same poet, addressing Greece, exclaims—

The hearts within thy valleys bred,
The fiery souls that might have led
Thy sons to deeds sublime,
Now crawl from cradle to the grave,
Slaves—nay, the bondsmen of a slave,
And callous, save to crime;
Stained with each evil that pollutes
Mankind, when least above the brutes.

And in another place he pertinently inquires—

Assyria, Greece, Rome, Carthage, what are they?
* * * their shores obey
The stranger, slave, or savage; THEIR DECAY
HAS DRIED UP REALMS TO DESERTS.

Byron, again, was no Darwinian; he could not discern symptoms of an approaching Utopia in any of the lands his hero visited: everything told him that, while earth, sea and sky retained all the attributes of beauty and power, man had dwindled.

The instances of decay which I have cited are familiar to everyone, and are but so many evidences of the "reign of law." If we extend the inquiry to the New World, the researches of Stephens in Central America, the pages of Robertson's History, the novels of Fenimore Cooper; none of them written with this object, all tend to show how universal is the law. The very title of the 'Last of the Mohicans,' like Gibbon's 'Decline and Fall,' is a faint but most ample acknowledgment of an irresistible truth. Objectors will say, In all these cases, the extinction, the decay, has been the result of violence: the Dodo, the Auk, the Egyptian, Carthaginian, Roman, Greek, Assyrian, Toltec, Mexican and Mohican, have met with a violent death. Yes: but why? Because, in their depauperated state, they could not hold their own; they could not maintain their ground. In almost every instance the wane has been slow and gradual, and the philosopher reading the 'Decline and Fall' and the 'Last of the Mohicans' may trace day by day the slowly weakening process of decay before the final blow came. As the giant oak that has stood immovable for a thousand years, and has braved ten thousand storms, submits, bit by bit, day by day, to the silent, the unseen attacks of minute insects, of rain-drops that follow in their tracks, of Fungi that feed on rottenness, and at last succumbs to some sudden blast, and falls: so has it been with every nation and with every people.

It has been said that there was something peculiar and exceptional in the decline of the peoples I have cited, and that there has been no subsequent instance of decadence. I doubt whether even this will hold good; I doubt whether a change is not coming over other peoples: we do not now fear an invasion of the Danes: we do not read of Van Tromp leading the Dutch up to the very walls of the Tower: we do not hear of Spain fitting out an invincible Armada or discovering and annexing a world. We do not read of the Moslems overrunning Europe. What is implied by the retreat of the Turks from Spain? What meant the term "sick man," applied by the late Emperor Nicholas to Turkey? Evolution, progress or what?

Authentic history finds every people in the zenith of its glory: probably that very glory is the primary cause of the historian's labours. Yet no people has ever been satisfied with the grand simplicity of truth;

no people has ever perceived the grandeur and all-sufficiency of that simplicity. All seek more fame: all yearn for the miraculous: all invent fables which posterity despises. One would have thought that Alexander of Macedon had written his name plainly enough on this globe of ours to satisfy the pride of his admiring countrymen; but it was not so: they invented for him a divine parentage. It was thus with Æneas. Again, it was insufficient for the Roman that he was universally admitted to be master of the world: the founder of Rome must be suckled by a wolf. It has been well said, there is but a step from the sublime to the ridiculous: all nations have taken that step. The remedy is now in the course of application. The truth-seeking spirit of the age is not only an antidote to the poison of fables that have been accepted as history, but to the hypotheses that have been grafted on fact. Hence the inestimable value of searching inquiry. Had all historic evidence been destroyed by the conflagration at Alexandria: had a series of earthquakes engulfed the remains of Nineveh, Thebes, Balbec, Palmyra and Athens: had not the printing-press multiplied, almost to infinity, our copies of the Bible, and of the works of Homer, Herodotus, Thucydides, Aristotle, Anacreon, Virgil: then indeed the enthusiastic Darwinian might have seated himself on a cupola of the National Gallery, and have been justified in pointing to our joint-stock hotels and railway-stations; to our railways and electric telegraphs; to the statues of our kings and the palaces of our poor; to the works of our Tuppers and our Tennysons; our Macaulays and our Carlyles; our Wests and our Lawrences; to our philanthropic associations and missionary enterprises; and might have exclaimed in exstatic rapture,—"Behold a people rapidly mounting upwards from the earth on which they tread towards the heaven to which they aspire! rejoice ye! rejoice ye! sing songs of triumph, pæans of self-adulation, that we are no longer the benighted savages our ancestors were: ours is the triumph of the mind: like the butterfly emerging from the chrysalis, we have attained a new existence, new powers, new organs of flight, we soar now above the earth on which we once crawled: we possess greater skill, higher intelligence, a more perfect self-control, a better co-ordination of action, a more complete life." There is nothing to interfere with this exultation unless it be the silent eloquence of those legacies which our remote ancestors have bequeathed to us.

EDWARD NEWMAN.

(To be continued.)

Ornithological Notes from North Lincolnshire.

By JOHN CORDEAUX, Esq.

(Continued from Zool. S. S. 1413.)

NOVEMBER AND DECEMBER, 1868.

Snow Bunting.—November 7. First observed; several seen flying over the "fittie" land near the Humber.

Tree Sparrow.—November 9. Amongst the many small birds now found in the stubbles are several flocks of this species. One flock which I find near the same place nearly every day numbers several hundred birds.

Shorteared Owl.—November 21. Put up one of these owls this morning from some ploughed land in the marshes. It is the only one I have seen this season.

Woodcock.—Have been remarkably scarce; I have seen none, and only heard of them as either shot or seen in the Humber district. These birds have also, so I am informed, been remarkably scarce in Holderness; very few have been exposed for sale in the Hull game-shops.

Fieldfare.—November 4. First seen, but very scarce, except during the last week in the month; in this week thousands arrived in the neighbourhood. On the 30th I observed more of these northern thrushes than I have ever before seen at one time in any previous season. Large flocks were constantly passing over from north to south during several hours; thousands were sitting grouped together on the grass-land after the manner of golden plover, for which birds I at first mistook them: many also of the detached hedges and solitary hawthorns swarmed with chattering crowds. I walked in the course of the day, in company with a friend, over a great extent of marsh-land, and everywhere saw large flocks; they were scattered here and there by hundreds and thousands over our marsh district. These birds were exceedingly wild and wary, and getting within shot was out of the question. These fieldfares were probably passing southward, as they remained only a few days in this district. Some large flocks, however, remain daily feasting on the abundant crop of haws, and wasting much more than they eat. They roost at some distance from their feeding-ground, in one of the small plantations near the "beck," containing a dense undergrowth of reeds and aquatic plants, overtopped by young larch and ash. I have often watched them between three and four o'clock on a winter's afternoon, coming into this cover, flying at a great height, and dashing down suddenly when over the plantation; for a time they perch on the higher trees, and are very noisy: as darkness falls, they fly down by two or three together, into the gloom of the underwood, perching on the boughs of the larch, and not, as far as I can ascertain, roosting on the ground. Deep gloom pervades the lower cover before the last fieldfare has settled to his place. Then for a time there is silence; the white mist creeps upwards from the lowlands, and looking along the course of the stream we can see the plantation tops only, standing out like islands in a misty sea: then, just as the first stars become visible, we hear, but cannot see, the wildfowl passing over; we can distinguish the rush and whistle of the golden plover, the winnowing of the peewits, and the louder flight of wild ducks, and, perchance, before we leave our post of observation, there come some flying lower than their brethren; then the mist is riven by a double flash, and we walk homewards with a fat mallard tucked into each pocket. I believe some of the flocks of fieldfares nightly roosting in this plantation come from a considerable distance, even crossing the Humber, here from five to six miles wide, as I have heard them, late in the afternoon, when walking on the embankment, passing over in the direction of their general roosting-ground.

Golden Plover.—Extremely abundant, although, as usual, very variable in their movements: often for days we find scarcely any in the marshes, and then, before rain and wind, thousands may be seen, flock after flock careering backwards and forwards the day through. This is the time to shoot them, as they fly very low—in fine still weather far out of shot, sometimes undistinguishable, except from their note. These birds feed principally on earth-worms, the supply of which, notwithstanding the immense flocks of worm eaters of various species frequenting these grass-lands, is practically inexhaustible. I have often been astonished, on paring off a thin sod, at the large number of earthworms exposed; they lie amongst the grass-roots close to the surface, and are thus easily accessible to the plover, starling and rook. The stomach of a golden plover opened lately contained a gray fluid, the remains of earth-worms, and several blades of grass. In six golden plovers recently examined I found three with the axillaries slightly edged and broken with gray. These feathers are not always uniformly white.

JOHN CORDEAUX.

Great Cotes, Ulceby, Lincolnshire,
January 2, 1869.

Ornithological Notes from the Isle of Wight.

By Captain HENRY HADFIELD.

(Continued from S. S. 1090.)

Partridge.—February 10, 1868. First observed in pairs. Partridges are scarce this season: owing to the hot summer the birds were strong on the wing by the 1st of September, and very wild, there being no turnips, clover, or cover of any kind for them.

Jackdaw.—March 2. The jackdaw is now paired.

Wheatear.—March 27. First seen to-day near Shanklin. Last seen, on the sea-cliffs, on the 4th of October.

Razorbill.—Was observed until the first week in April.

Swallow and Martin.—April 7. Three swallows observed to-day; there had been white frost on the 5th. Martins not observed by me till the 19th. On the 3rd of November I saw two or three swallows flying about the sea-cliffs at Shanklin; and on the 9th of December either a swallow or a martin, it being too distant to determine which. They generally linger about the sandstone-cliffs, near the Chine, long after the main body has migrated, and are, in mild winters, occasionally met with there and in the Undercliff as late as the first week in December. That these stray birds perish there can be little doubt, for if not immature or sickly they would have migrated at the usual time. Both swallows and martins have been scarce: the former are seldom found nesting in the Undercliff, but the latter usually breed here in considerable numbers; during the past summer, however, few nests were to be seen. Probably, owing to the long-continued drought, no material could be obtained; our chalky, friable soil, requiring much moistening and kneading before it can be rendered in any degree adhesive: their only chance of obtaining suitable materials was from off the watered roads and streets, and there they meet with constant interruption, and lose the supply of a Sunday. The martin has not the faculty of moistening the sun-baked earth or clay.

Great Northern Diver.—April 8. Last seen on this coast.

Redstart.—April 19. First seen.

Whitethroat.—April 19. Seen to-day in the garden.

Hedgesparrow.—April 19. This species has commenced breeding.

Cuckoo: the Egg Question.—April 25. Cuckoo first heard. Though not wishing to discuss the new but somewhat vexed question, as to the cuckoo's power over the egg, in diversifying the colour at will, I may remark, if the theory prove true, that it is somewhat strange that neither the African cuckoo nor the American cow-bird have been endowed with the like faculty. That the cow-bird does not possess it the following extract from Wilson's work clearly shows:—"I had, in numerous instances, found in the nests of three or four particular species of birds, one egg much larger and differently marked from those beside it: I had remarked that these odd-looking eggs were all of the same colour, and marked nearly in the same manner, in whatever nest they lay, though frequently the eggs beside them were of quite a different tint." Are we, then, to suppose that the birds of America are less sharp-sighted than those of Europe or Africa? Buffon might have said so. With regard to the African cuckoo, I am informed by Mr. Rogers, of Freshwater, whom I have questioned on the subject, that he is quite certain, from personal observation, that its eggs are unlike those of the species in whose nests it lays. That the cuckoo's eggs vary in colour is well known; so do those of many other species, the common house sparrow, blackbird, &c. As to the reference made to the white-streaked rods set before the flocks by the patriarch Jacob, was it not a special and miraculous interposition of Providence? Why, then, the comparison?

Redthroated Diver and Gannet.—The redthroated diver was seen off Shanklin towards the end of September: weather stormy but mild; thermometer 60°. The gannet appeared on our coast about the same time.

Crossbill.—October 5. Several seen about the village and in the neighbourhood of Shanklin, where there are extensive fir and larch plantations; and a small flock made its appearance here later in the month. They must have visited the island in considerable numbers, as I heard of many being offered for sale to the birdstuffers, but mostly so disfigured and mutilated by large shot as to be useless. It is sad to see so beautiful and confiding a bird thus needlessly slaughtered. It is difficult to account for these irregular migratory flights: want of food cannot well be the cause, as it is obtainable at all seasons, neither can it be for nidification.

Rook.—Owing to the exceeding mildness of the winter rooks are returning to their nesting-trees. On the 20th of December I observed numbers collected about the old nests in the lofty elms near Bonchurch, in their usual state of excitement when about to rebuild or repair nests.

Thrush.—The thrush has been in song through the winter up to this time; and, in consequence of the warm Christmas, has escaped the usual slaughter carried on at this season.

Raven.—Two young ravens belonging to Sergeant Rossiter, of Sandown,—taken from the Culver Cliffs, where a pair or two usually breed,—were visited during the summer by five old ones. A novel and interesting sight, too, that of seven such shy and wary birds congregating about a house in a town. The tame ravens, I hear, are as resplendent in plumage as the wild ones.

In June I saw at Mr. Smith's, the Newport taxidermist, a hobby (which had been recently shot in the island), a specimen of the hen harrier, a beautifully pied jackdaw of the season, and a brood of four white or pied hedgesparrows, taken from the nest. I was shown a green woodpecker, shot the previous September in the forest by one of the Parkhurst officials: it is the third green woodpecker, in the flesh, that has come into Smith's hands within a few years, so there can be no doubt, after the instances recorded, of their occasionally appearing in the island.

On visiting the Freshwater Cliffs, in June, the herring gull only was observed, and that by no means numerously; but I was told that a few pairs of the lesser blackbacked gull still nest there, as does also the peregrine falcon. I saw at Mr. Rogers's a remarkably fine hoopoe, in perfect plumage, shot in the neighbourhood; also a bittern, little auk, skua and little sandpiper; and was informed by him that he had lately seen, when walking on the Downs, three choughs flying about the cliffs, being the first he had observed at Freshwater during a residence of many years.

HENRY HADEIELD.

Ventnor, Isle of Wight,
January 4, 1869.

On the Occurrence of the Whitethroated Sparrow (Zonotrichia albicollis) *in Aberdeenshire*. By W. C. ANGUS, Esq.*

I HAVE much pleasure in adding this interesting North American species to the fauna of Europe. The bird which I send for exhibition, along with this notice, was shot by Mr. Mitchell, August 17th, 1867, near the Broad Hill, on the Links of Aberdeen. It was put into my hands immediately after being procured, and I made a careful examination of the specimen before it was skinned.

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* Read before the Natural History Society of Glasgow, March 31st, 1868.

The following description and measurements of the bird were then taken:—Length, six inches and a half; length of tail, about three inches; wing, from carpus, nearly three inches; wings, when closed, reaching to the extremity of the tail-coverts; irides hazel. Bill robust: mandibles compressed at the tips, the upper, which is longest, being hooked at the tip and darker in colour. From the nostril to the back of the head there is a distinct line, which is of a rich yellow in front of the eye and a dull white behind it. Feathers on the crown of the head reddish brown at the base, and rich brownish black at the tips, divided by a medial whitish line; feathers on the shoulders rich bay at the base and tipped with reddish brown, those on the back having brighter tints and a longitudinal spot of black on the tips. Rump olive-brown; chin white; breast dusky; under parts dirty white; feathers on the sides somewhat darker along their shafts. Quills dusky; outer webs margined with white. First quill short; third, fourth and fifth, about equal, and longest in the wing. First and sixth about equal in length; second, third, fourth and fifth quills abruptly cut away on the outer webs. Secondaries emarginate, edged with ferruginous on the outer webs. A double bar on the wings is formed by the white tips of the greater and lesser wing-coverts, the line on the smaller coverts being more conspicuous; the first feather being yellow, like the lower surface of the wing shoulder. Tail dusky, straight, consisting of twelve feathers, the outer webs being broad at the base, while the inner webs are broad at the points. Tarsus seven-eighths of an inch long; legs and toes robust; claws convex and sharp.

Sex, female. The stomach contained grass, sand, seeds and insects.

Variation.—On comparing the specimen described above with a male from New Brunswick, forwarded to me by the Society's secretary, and with other specimens obligingly lent to me by Professor Nicol of Marischal College, I find a slight difference in the bills—the sinus of the upper mandible being more or less distinct. The colours of the male in the New Brunswick specimen are not nearly so bright as those of the specimens belonging to the College Museum here,* the latter being, moreover, distinguished by having the whole throat mapped off by distinct straight lines. The tail-feathers in all the specimens are more or less worn, the central feathers, which are wiry to the base, having, in some instances, merely the shafts remaining.

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* These specimens were presented to the Museum by Audubon, and are labelled in the handwriting of the late Professor Macgillivray.

According to Wilson, this is the largest and handsomest of the American sparrows, and is common from Connecticut to Savannah, particularly in the neighbourhood of the Roanoke river, and in the rice plantations. In summer they retire inland and further north to breed. They remain in flocks during winter, preferring the borders of swampy thickets, creeks, and mill-ponds, skirted with alder-bushes and rank weeds, the seeds of which form their principal food. Early in spring they have a few remarkably sweet and clear notes, which they utter a little after sunrise. "About the 20th of April," adds Wilson, "they disappear, and we see no more of them till the beginning or second week of October."

Pennant gives Pennsylvania, New York, and Newfoundland as its habitat.

I am much indebted to Mr. Mitchell for kindly presenting me with this specimen, which has now been added to my collection. From its general resemblance to some of the female buntings, the bird might have, in less enthusiastic hands, altogether escaped observation. When shot it was perched on the top of a whin bush, and attracted Mr. Mitchell's attention by its note, and the manner of flirting its tail. I have only to add that the bird bore no traces of having been in confinement, the wings, tail and all the lower plumage being quite clean. W. C. ANGUS.

Irish Insect-hunting Grounds. By EDWIN BIRCHALL, Esq.

THE BOG OF ALLEN.

ACROSS the centre of Ireland, brown and bare and desolate, covering nearly half a million of acres, and extending eighty miles from east to west, and as much from north to south, lies this huge "Dismal Swamp." It may give some idea of the flatness of the great plain upon which the Bog of Allen is situated, and through which the Shannon rolls its sluggish flood, to say that a light upon Killiney Hill, near Dublin, can be seen from the Nephin Mountains in Mayo, one hundred and fifty miles distant, and the Bog probably owes its origin to the imperfect drainage consequent upon the configuration of the country. Attractions for the wandering tourist the district has none. Even the naturalist, to whom the picturesque is a secondary consideration, wisely avoids its dreary solitudes, and it can only be called an insect-hunting ground on the "lucus a non lucendo" principle.

Philipstown and Tullamore, the two largest towns of the King's County, are situated on what may be called oases in the midst of the Bog, and the author of an old rhyme seems to have thought them as dismal as the surrounding Bog, when he wrote—

"Great Bog of Allen swallow down
That odious heap called Philipstown;
And if thy maw can swallow more,
Pray take and welcome Tullamore."

I have more than once made excursions into the Bog from these cities of refuge, but with scant success, as far as Entomology is concerned. Chortobius Typhon, Saturnia Carpini, Bombyx Rubi, Aspilates strigillaria and Schrankia turfosalis were my usual captures, and mostly abundant: the only rarities I ever met with were Dasycampa rubiginea and Xylina petrificata; these were on ivy at Tullamore—one specimen of the former, and the latter in profusion. Nature has been so liberal in her gift of peat bogs to Ireland, that Irishmen may be pardoned for believing, as many of them do, that they will one day prove a source of untold wealth, and many and costly have been the attempts, ending in loss, to convert into coal, oil or candles these vast accumulations of fuel; but the old-fashioned peat-cutter is still mostly in possession, and plies his spade the summer through, piling up immense stacks of turf all along the course of the canal which traverses the Bog: his cabin is usually a sort of pit under a dry bank, the roof a few branches placed across and covered with heath or turf, through which the smoke makes its way, and is the only sign of the vicinity of a human habitation, than which surely nothing more miserable can be found on the surface of the planet. Happily for these poor bogtrotters, their health does not suffer, as is the case with persons living on the margins of morasses where vegetables are decaying: a swamp abounding in rank vegetation emits noxious vapours at the season when the decay of the plants takes place, but a peat bog is of a different nature, being highly antiseptic, so that animals and vegetables remain for ages unchanged in its depths. This being the case it has surprised me to find the remains of but few insects embedded in the peat: I have only been able to obtain a few elytra of beetles of the genus Donacia, apparently those of still-existing species.

On one of my incursions into the Bog of Allen, near its southern extremity, I visited the ruins of Monaincha. In former times it appears what is now bog was a lake, in which were two islands, and even a century ago they are said not to have been accessible except in boats, the present drainage being choked by fallen trees: the old islands are a little raised above the level of the surrounding bog, and on them are the very ancient monastic ruins. Little of their structure can now be made out; but as the account given by Cambrensis, who visited them in the reign of King John, about A. D. 1185, is curious, and may be new to many of the readers of the 'Zoologist,' I venture to transcribe it:—"In North Munster is a lake containing two isles; in the greater is a church of the ancient religion, and in the lesser a chapel, wherein a few monks called Culdees devoutly serve God. In the greater isle no woman or any animal of the feminine gender ever enters but it immediately dies. This has been proved by many experiments. In the lesser isle no one can die; hence it is called Insula Viventum: often people are afflicted with diseases in it, and are almost in the agonies of death; when all hopes of life are at an end, and the sick man would rather quit the world than lead longer a life of misery, they are put into a little boat and wafted over to the larger isle, where as soon as they land they expire." I cannot say whether ladies ever venture to visit these interesting ruins; perhaps the drainage of the lake has broken the charm, but I will not guarantee their safety.

Amongst the Irish state papers there is a record relative to Monaincha, which exhibits a curious and melancholy picture of the state of Ireland in the early part of Queen Elizabeth's reign. Commissioners (two of whom rejoiced in the elegant cognomens of Dermoyd O'Towgha and Dermoyd Oge O'Dolgen) who were appointed to inquire as to "all land and all and singular other things for the Queen," report that the Monastery of the Virgin Mary in the island, of the living with all its profits, belongs to the Queen, and valued the land of the Priory in arable and pasture, comprising 533 acres, at £4 2*s.* 2*d.* The O'Mores and the O'Connors, and the rest of the O's of the period, are described as perpetually in array against the English Government; the country about Monaincha was alternately wasted by the English and Irish forces; the labour of the plough ceased, and the miserable peasants deserted their cabins and withdrew to the mountains and bogs to prolong a wretched existence.

Dr. Ledwich's 'Antiquities of Ireland,' published in 1803, contains a curious paragraph relative to the great extinct deer (*Megaceros* *hibernicus*), the bones of which are so frequently disinterred from the bogs: he says that he "once imagined that these deer, whose remains we behold with wonder, were common, and that the Firbolgs,—a northern tribe said to have invaded Ireland three hundred years before our era,—who delighted in hunting, had early destroyed them." This opinion, he goes on to say, he relinquishes, "because the teeth of elephants have also been found in this island, an animal which we are sure was not a native; and the President of the Royal Irish Academy, Richard Kirwan, LL.D., F.R.S. (Trans. R. I. Acad., vol. vi., p. 233), whose mineralogical, chemical and philosophical knowledge is admired in every part of Europe, and whose talent and accomplishments reflect the highest honour on his native country, having by solid reasoning, from Scripture and Geology, demonstrated that this appearance of the southern animals was in consequence of the Deluge." We may smile at the learned President's solid reasoning, but perhaps another generation will write Ichabod on some of our own choicest speculations: viewed, however, in the light which modern research has thrown upon the subject, Dr. Ledwich would have done better to have stuck to his Firbolgs. EDWIN BIRCHALL.

Airedale Cliff, Newlay, Leeds,
December 20, 1868.

NOTICES OF NEW BOOKS.

'*The Mysteries of the Ocean.*' Translated, Edited and Enlarged from the French of ARTHUR MANGIN, by the Translator of 'The Birds.' London: T. Nelson and Sons, Paternoster Row.

THANKS, gentle translator of 'The Birds,' whoever thou mayst be, for this beautiful and welcome present. Well hast thou written that, "in order to adapt it to the wants of an English reader, and to make it more complete as a survey of the life and history of the ocean," thou hast made "numerous interpolations and additions, amounting probably to a fifth of the whole;" and again thou hast "also been careful to bring down the information to the latest date, and to exhibit the results of the most recent scientific research." I desire to state most explicitly that the subject is one of the greatest interest, one on which there has long existed a gap in our literature, notwithstanding the unwearying efforts of my friend Mr. Gosse. Then, as regards the getting up; the printing, paper and binding are superb: the wood-cuts are of rare excellence; and I very sincerely congratulate the publishers on having produced a book which, even in these days of book-luxury, is more than commonly attractive.

I am quite unacquainted with the original work of which this is the translation, but the author or translator—for, like the Siamese twins, they are not safely separable—seems to entertain some novel views. In one instance, however, the translator gives French and English side by side: this occurs in a learned dissertation, at p. 224, on the structure of the wing of the pterodactyle, in which we find that "it has been named 'pterodactylus' because the fifth toe of its anterior limbs was enormously prolonged, and evidently intended to support a membrane forming a wing as powerful as that of the great tomtits." I admit that my Zoology entirely failed me in any attempt to understand this recondite passage until I found, by the translator's kind assistance, that the word translated "tomtits" stood in the original "roussettes," by which Cuvier designated those frugivorous bats, some of which are a constant source of attraction at the Zoological Gardens. This doubtless is one of "the results of the most recent scientific research" on which the author seems to plume himself.

Such changes of name are of constant occurrence. At p. 323 the *saw*-fish (*Squalus pristis* or *Pristis antiquorum*) is called the "common sword-fish (*Xiphias gladius*):" at page 326, the red fire-fish (*Pterois volitans*) is called "the flying-fish (*Exocœtus volitans*):" at page 333, the purple-finned sailor-fish (*Histiophorus immaculatus*) is called "the flying-fish of the Indies," and on the same page the name "sword-fish" is restored to Xiphias gladius; so that it is evident that our learned authors consider the *sword*-fish and *saw*-fish identical, the slight difference in the structure of beak and tail not being held sufficient to distinguish them as varieties. In like manner, at p. 382, the puffin (*Fratercula arctica*), the great auk (*Alca impennis*), and the razorbill (*Alca torda*) are reduced to a single species, which the author names "the penguin (*Spheniscus aptenodytes*);" and here another great feature in the work is worthy of attentive observation; in uniting these species so dissimilar we have the strongest evidence yet adduced in favour of that metamorphotic doctrine usually called Darwinianism. But to proceed, at p. 384 we have an excellent figure of the king penguin (*Aptenodytes Pennantii*), called "the great auk (*Alca impennis*)," but I am rather puzzled to find, on the following page (385), the same bird called the "booby gannet." I have adopted both names, and in my English Cuvier, have altered the king penguin thus—"Great

Auk or Booby Gannet." The "gorfou," at p. 386, is an admirable representation of the bird we used to call the "crested penguin." "The lesser black-backed gull (*Larus fuscus*)," p. 393, is a most accurate representation of the bird I have known from my childhood as the common cormorant. "The Storm Petrel or Mother Carey's Chicken (*Thalassidroma pelagica*)," at p. 397, is represented as a large and exquisitely spotted bird altogether different from the black swallow-like bird to which I have been accustomed to give that familiar name.

The three changers of received names, Swainson, Neville Wood and Macgillivray, are fairly distanced in this competitive nomenclature. All the three naturalists I have mentioned tried to convey a meaning in their new names, however neatly concealed; but in this translation of Mangin all is travestied: as in our pantomimes everybody is turned into somebody else.

I have said I never saw the original of this work, and therefore it is very difficult to make out which of these metamorphoses is due to the wand of the author and which to that of the translator; or whether both are harlequins: and it is equally difficult to make out when they are in earnest and when they are poking their fun at us. It is scarcely more easy to understand the birth of ocean. The authors, writing of "the Brute Period in which as yet no sign of life has appeared," evidently a kind of *lucus a non lucendo* period, proceed thus:—"The first rains fall. At the outset they are almost immediately evaporated upon coming in contact with the burning soil; but it cools all the more quickly: thus they are condensed to fall again and again, until liquid layers (so to speak) form and develop, augment in depth, and increase in extent, finally spreading over a considerable area, or even the entirety, of the earth's surface. Thus is born the Ocean."—p. 17.

This graphic description is rendered still more complete by a spirited engraving of "The primæval Ocean," with a chain of wild geese flying above its surface: one can't help thinking they must have felt thankful for so vast a supply of what they were henceforward to consider as their natural element: but this is one of the "mysteries" the volume leaves unexplained.

I recollect that the late Mr. Swainson, whose labours were once criticized rather severely by one who unfortunately acknowledged his inability to understand them, retorted that he had "written for generations yet unborn, not for such small minds as now intruded themselves into the walks of science." This is the case with the authors before me; they write for more advanced naturalists than myself—"for generations yet unborn." There can, however, be no doubt that the fairest way to treat authors is that which I have always adopted, of allowing them to speak for themselves; and for this purpose I have selected a few passages which most nearly approach my own ideas of the intelligible in Natural History; and these I place in the hands of my readers without note or comment. Should they contain instruction my readers are most welcome to it. Should they contain passages that deserve reprehension I will not be instrumental in inviting attention to them.

Crustaceans.—"When we consider the almost invincible power which the Crustaceans derive from their armour, their muscular vigour, their ferocity, and their numbers, we ask how it is that they have not depopulated the shores, where they meet none but victims, no enemies capable of contending with them upon equal terms? For formidable as they are, and all the tribes of Mollusks and Zoophytes, what have they to fear? except in a few countries, certain littoral or amphibious animals, which, for the most part, only attack them as a last resort, preferring prey more easily devoured, and assisting them in their work of extermination rather than fighting them. The great fishes, the cetaceans, whose teeth of iron easily crush their armour, and upon whom their pincers vainly seek to lay hold, inhabit the deep seas. The carnivorous mollusks, with their long arms perforated with air-holes, their hard and crooked beaks, dare not assault them. Their tyranny, then, seems at first sight absolute, and without counterbalance; and we are tempted to believe that for the advantage of these invulnerable depredators the grand law of equilibrium and compensation has been neglected. Such, however, is not the case. Not only does man wage war everywhere against the strongest, whose flesh is always the firmest and most savoury, a war in which their nippers, their spears, their saws and their cuirasses avail them nothing; but the crustaceans also undergo at certain epochs a fatal crisis, which, delivering them up defenceless to external shocks and the blows of their enemies, places an easy vengeance within the reach of the oppressed. These epochs are their sloughing-times, when, willy nilly, with great difficulty, and at the cost of the most painful, and sometimes the deadliest efforts, they are forced to shed their armour of proof, to expose their living flesh barely covered with a thin soft pellicle, and to bury themselves piteously under the sand until the calcareous secretion shall be reformed and solidified anew. This is their season of fear and flight;

it is the hour of reprisal. Their hiding-places are easily discoverable, and once unearthed the disarmed brigands are lost beyond redemption. Myriads perish in this manner, devoured by other animals, crushed among the stones, or dashed in pieces against the rocks by the movement of the waves. The sloughing or shedding operation is more or less frequent, according to the species, the rapidity of increase, and their age. It takes place but once a-year with the decapoda; but it is of more frequent occurrence among the inferior kinds, whose increase is swift, whose life is short, and which in two or three days repair the loss of their cuirasses."—p. 256.

Sword-fish.—"The sword-fish (*Xiphias*) is placed by Cuvier in the Scomberidæ, or mackerel family. Its length sometimes exceeds twenty feet, and its beak measures one-third of its length. It is one of the swiftest denizens of the deep, and endowed with prodigious vigour. Hence it has not unfrequently happened that a sword-fish has struck a ship and driven its blade right through the scantling. The ancient naturalists, and many modern writers, affirm that with the aid of this terrible weapon it attacks the whale, and engages in desperate combats, when the victory is not always to the strongest. But it suffers in its turn from a small crustacean animal, which penetrates into its flesh, and sometimes tortures it so keenly that it will dash ashore with a violence fatal to its own life."—p. 322.

Thalassites.—"In my chapter upon the inhabitants of the primæval ocean, I have brought the reader acquainted with those gigantic and terrible animals—half fish, half crocodile—which committed such terrible ravages in its waters. The revolutions of the surface of the globe have annihilated these monsters, and the class of reptiles is simply represented to-day, in the marine world, by a few species, of great size, it is true, but of inoffensive habits, which feed only upon the sea-weed, or at most upon the small mollusks or zoophytes. All these species belong to a single family—the Chelonidæ, turtles, or marine tortoises. They receive the name of Thalassites (Greek *Thalassa*, the sea), to distinguish them from the land-tortoises (*Testudinata, Chersites*), the marsh tortoises (*Emydæ*) and the river tortoises (*Potamites*). They are the largest of all the Chelonidæ. They differ chiefly from their terrestrial congeners in the conformation of their feet, which, like those of all animals destined to spend their lives in the ocean tracts, are changed into paddle-like fins, and so flattened that the toes cannot execute, one over the other, any voluntary movement. The anterior pair are much longer than the hind feet, and can be used as oars, enabling the animal to move through the water in any direction and comparative swiftness. The entire structure of the Thalassites is skilfully adapted to their essentially aquatic mode of existence. Their respiration alone is aërial, like that of the terrestrial reptiles, and for this reason they may claim to be ranked among the *guests* of the ocean. Their shell is much depressed, and presents the form of a shield enlarged in front, with a gash or indentation, and terminating in a point at the other extremity: it is so disposed that the animal can entirely conceal beneath it his head and feet. The head, nearly square, is armed with a kind of horny beak, very strong, curved and hooked down. The jaws are strong; the tongue is broad, short, fleshy and very moveable; along with the beak it is the only prehensile organ of these reptiles. The neck is long, the tail short, round and tolerably thick."—p. 369.

EDWARD NEWMAN.

Elephant Preserving.—We understand that the Madras Government have decided, with regard to the destruction of elephants, that on all waste and forest land the property of government, of zemindars, or others, the destruction of the female elephant should be prohibited under a penalty of from ten to five hundred rupees fine, and imprisonment not exceeding one month in default of payment. The destruction of the male elephant should be prohibited on all waste or forest lands, the property of government, under the same penalty, except by persons holding a license to shoot the male elephant from the collector of the district. Zemindars and other proprietors would retain the right to shoot the male elephant on their waste lands without the license of government. The right to shoot elephants trespassing on cultivated lands and on the high roads would remain as at present common to all. Persons shooting on waste lands and others would be exonerated from the penalties attached to the destruction of an elephant, when it could be proved that the act was committed in self-defence. The same exoneration would be extended to those who should destroy on waste land an elephant found on cultivated land, and pursued from thence. In addition to these legal provisions it will be desirable to offer rewards to persons belonging to the forest department, and others, who may give such information of the illicit destruction of elephants as may lead to the conviction of the offenders; that a stipulated price should also be paid for every elephant caught or trapped on private lands, and brought in alive and uninjured to any officer of revenue, police, or commissariat department; and that rewards for the destruction of elephants will no longer be given except in cases where it may be necessary for the protection of life or property to offer specific rewards for elephants known to be dangerous or notoriously infesting and destroying cultivation.—*Madras Times.*

Otters in Suffolk.—During the last week in November, 1868, a large otter was trapped in the Rev. William's park at Glenring, near Wickham Market, Suffolk; and on the 10th of December a dog otter was shot, as it was in the act of taking refuge in the upper branches of a pollard oak, by a keeper, near Langholme Bridge, which crosses the Alde, a few miles from this place. Several otters have been seen in the reed-beds by the banks of the same river; and on several occasions since October I have found remains of pike upon the ground near various small streams in this neighbourhood.—*Alexander Clark-Kennedy; Wickham Market, Suffolk, December* 18, 1868.

White Fox in North Wales.—A purely white specimen of the common fox is reported to have been seen upon several occasions, during the month of December, in the woods a few miles from this house, but the hounds have not dropped upon it yet. Several persons have seen this remarkable animal, and there is no reason to doubt their statements. As I am writing of variations of colour in animals, I may as well mention that the gamekeeper told me a few days back that he saw an albino squirrel shot in a covert near Erddig last winter.—*Id.; Erddig Park, Wrexham, Denbigh, January* 3, 1869.

Pied Hare in Suffolk.—Early in November last the Duke of Hamilton, while out shooting near Easton Park, killed a hare which was prettily marked with white and iron-gray. The head, ears and part of the neck were white, mingled with gray, and the legs, feet and part of the chest were of a milk-white hue, as was a portion of the back, altogether giving the animal a curious appearance.—*Id.*

Barbastelle Bat at Salisbury.—I am not aware that the barbastelle (*Barbastellus Daubentonii*, of Bell) has been previously captured in our county; but, even if it has, the occurrence of so rare a British bat, especially at this time of the year, may not be without interest to some of the readers of the 'Zoologist.' The specimen alluded to is that of a very fine adult male, which, on the 1st instant, was noticed flying about the fields in the immediate vicinity of our city in broad daylight. A person who was passing knocked it down with his walking-stick, and took it to Mr. Best, a birdstuffer, living in Milford-street. Mr. Best told me the bat was very active (its right wing was broken by the blow from the stick, but it had apparently received no other injury), and, crippled as it was, managed to climb up and down its captor's arm. The almost total absence of frost, and general mild climate of the present season doubtless interfered with the hybernation of this little barbastelle; hunger induced it to venture out and endeavour to procure a few gnats when it met with its untimely death. The capture at this time of the year is the more remarkable as the barbastelle is a bat known to inhabit the south of France.—*H. P. Blackmore; Salisbury, Wilts, January* 1869.

Whitetailed Eagle in Suffolk.—Lord Henniker sent me on the 26th inst. a specimen of the above bird, which was caught in a trap baited with rabbit for gray crows, on the 20th inst., on the north side of the Home Wood, Thornham. It was a fine bird, in immature plumage, and consequently without the white tail. It measured across the wings, from tip to tip, 7¾ feet, and, although the plumage was a good deal injured by rolling in the mud, Mr. Ambrose, of this town—to whose skilful hands it has been consigned—hopes to turn out a tolerably fair skin. Another eagle, probably of the same species, was frequently seen about ten days ago at Alresford, near this place; but, being shot at and missed, it flew away. I wrote to Col. Hawkins for information as to dates, and he writes me word that it was last seen about the 16th or 17th, which would make it probable that the captured bird was the same. An eagle in these days is a rare bird in Suffolk or Essex, and it is a fatal change of habit for the erne when it takes to hunting rabbits instead of fishing in the sea. Thornham and Airesford are about forty miles apart, "as the eagle flies."—*C. R. Bree; Colchester, December* 29, 1868.—*From the 'Field.'*

Osprey at Epworth.—A beautiful specimen of the osprey was brought to me, on Saturday, December 5, 1868, for preservation; it had been shot the day before on our marsh, near the Trent: it was assailed by a number of crows, and fell a victim to another enemy whilst combating courageously with its foes. It is a fine old male in adult plumage. This is the second specimen I have had during the last five years; the first was shot on the banks of the River Trent, in the act of devouring a large fish. —*J. F. Gravil, jun.; Epworth, January* 6, 1869.

Peregrine Falcon at Epworth.—The peregrines have again made their appearance on our marsh; they generally do so in January, and stay with us about a month—that is, when they are fortunate enough to escape the gamekeeper's traps and guns, to which, I am sorry to say, a great number of them fall victims. The large quantity of water-fowl to be found on our low and marsh-lands accounts for these noble birds being found here. In the latter part of January, 1868, a pair of peregrines in the flesh were brought to me by the gamekeepers, who told me they had trapped them in consequence of their having made such havoc among the ducks, &c.—*Id.*

Peregrine Falcon in Sussex.—A fine male was shot near Rottingdean early in the morning of the 9th of November, by Mr. G. R. Guthrie, making the fifth obtained by that gentleman: on the evening of the same day, at dusk, a female was shot by Mr. Bates, who shot a merlin the same day: the former gentleman shot a longtailed duck on the 11th and a green sandpiper on the 13th.—*T. W. Wonfor; Hon. Sec. Brighton and Sussex Nat. Hist. Society.*

Merlin near Epworth.—Two of these beautiful birds, the smallest of our British falcons, which were recently brought to me, in the flesh, proved on dissection to be adult males. The merlin is a very scarce bird in this part of Lincolnshire.—*J. F. Gravil.*

The Sparrowhawk.—An instance of the boldness of the sparrowhawk when in pursuit of its prey, occurred at my house about four o'clock yesterday. A crash of broken glass was heard in the kitchen, and on a servant going to ascertain the cause, the hawk was found fluttering in the window, and was secured without resistance. It had dashed in through one of the panes, making a round hole five or six inches in diameter. A cage containing a canary was standing on a table close to the window, and this had evidently tempted the hawk. When first caught it seemed rather stunned, but soon recovered, and was able to fly away, apparently no worse for the adventure. I take this opportunity to mention that my observations regarding the nidification of this bird, lead me to differ in opinion from many people, who allege that it *seldom builds its own nest.* Several have come under my notice during the last few years, and in each case the nest has certainly been newly built by the hawk itself.—*James Murton; Silverdale, West Lancaster, January* 16, 1869.

Common Buzzard at Boughton, near Faversham.—A specimen of the common buzzard was shot at Boughton about the 28th of December.—*A. Skinner; West Street, Faversham, January* 18, 1868.

Roughlegged Buzzard near Faversham.—A specimen of this bird was taken, by a keeper, in the summer, from a trap baited with a partridge.—*Id.*

Hen Harrier at Epworth.—A specimen of the hen harrier, a very rare bird in this neighbourhood, was recently shot on our marsh-lands by one of the gamekeepers, and was brought to me for preservation: on dissection it proved to be an adult male.—*J. F. Gravil.*

Great Gray Shrike at Henley-on-Thames.—I had a fine specimen of the great gray shrike brought to me to name, last Thursday, the 21st: it was shot at Cross-Lands near here: there were two of them; the other one was seen on the day following.—*Charles E. Stubbs; Henley-on-Thames, January* 25, 1869.

Blackthroated Thrush near Lewes.—On Wednesday, 23rd of December, a fine example of the blackthroated thrush was shot near Lewes. The bird, which proved on dissection to be a male, was in excellent condition, and, having been carefully handled, was in fine order for preservation; and in this respect has received ample justice from the hands of Mr. Swaysland, of Brighton, where it may be seen. This *rara avis* is well described by Bree, in his "Birds of Europe," and on comparison with the engraving, vol. i., page 187, was easily distinguished. It is, I believe, the first specimen taken in Great Britain.—*T. J. Monk; Mountfield House, Lewes, December* 29, 1848.—*From the 'Field.'*

Robin sitting in December.—It may be interesting to some of your readers to know that a robin is sitting on four eggs in a hedge close by the rectory garden in this parish.—*A. H. Monckton Russell; Laverton Rectory, Bath, December* 24, 1868.—*Id.*

Dartford Warbler near Truro.—The Dartford warbler has been reported as having occurred in some parts of West Cornwall, but I have not succeeded in recording an example ever since I commenced collecting, which is nearly forty years ago, until to-day, when Mr. Vingoe shewed me a specimen which he had received from Killiow, the seat of the Rev. John Daubuz, who shot it near his residence.—*Edward Hearle Rodd; Penzance, January* 11, 1869.

Dartford Warbler: Notes from Jersey.—I have but little ornithological news for you. The most remarkable thing I have seen were two Dartford warblers on the 16th of this month near Grève de Lecq, in Jersey: I was much surprised to see them at this season, and the more so as I find the bird is not included in the list given in Ansted's 'Channel Islands.' Spring in Jersey had already commenced when I was there a week ago, and I am told it is quite a common thing to see young birds (of the thrush and blackbird) as early as the end of February. The last two or three days have been more like winter weather, and on Friday a good many woodcocks were killed near St. Sampson's. In the birdstuffer's shop here I saw a little gull, in the flesh, which had been shot a few days ago; also a young great northern diver, of which there have been a good many killed this season: they have now, however, mostly left. In Jersey one day a gentleman brought in a redlegged partridge he had shot out of a covey of twelve. They are now a rare bird in the Channel Islands, having been nearly all shot down. Mr. Green, the landlord of the "British Hotel," St. Heliers, has a very perfect and carefully-preserved collection of the birds killed in the island, which he kindly showed me. But there are comparatively few people in the Channel Islands who are interested in this branch of Natural History. Floriculture seems the favourite, and the gardens, which are even now beautiful, must be resplendent in summer. The island of Herm is exceedingly rich in shells and in rabbits. Serk is famous for its rock scenery and huge aquariums in the form of caves in the rock with pools left by the tide: these two islands, however, I have not yet seen, except at a distance, so must stop short in my descriptions until I have done so.—*John A. H. Brown; St. Peter Port, Guernsey, January* 25, 1869.

Dwarf Meadow Pipit.—A very minute specimen, in perfect plumage, was obtained on November 9th, near Cliftonville, and was taken to Swaysland: from its size and general appearance, thinking it a new species, he sent it to Mr. Slater, who pronounced it a dwarf. It measures five inches and one-eighth from beak to tail.—*T. W. Wonfor.*

Richard's Pipit near Barnstaple.—I shot a beautiful specimen of this fine species yesterday on Braunton Marsh, within a quarter of a mile of the spot where I killed one about three years ago. It is a young male of the year, and evidently a late bird as the gape is very large, soft and yellow. I was attracted to it by its loud and peculiar note. Yarrell gives six inches and three quarters as the whole length of the male bird: mine must be an extra large one, as it measures a trifle over seven inches and a quarter.—*Gervase F. Mathew; Barnstaple, January* 5, 1869.

Young Chaffinches in Nestling Plumage.—Mr. Clogg says, in his remarks upon the chaffinch published in the last number of the 'Zoologist' (S. S. 1514), that the young birds retain their nestling feathers till the spring moult, and that many of those seen in the winter in the plumage of the female are in reality young males: this statement is certainly incorrect. The chaffinch, like all the other finches, moults in the autumn, and the whole of the feathers of the young birds are shed, with the exception of the quill-feathers of the wings and tail, which are not changed till the autumn of the following year. The young males assume the plumage characteristic of the sex, but the colours are not quite so bright as those of older birds. The only change that takes place in the spring is the shedding of the brown margins of the feathers of the head and the back of the neck, after which process the colours appear brighter: there is no vernal moult. Sparrows shed the whole of their nestling feathers the first autumn, in this respect differing from the true finches, and indeed from most of the other British birds.—*Henry Doubleday; Epping, January* 1, 1869.

Hawfinches near Faversham.—In June I observed several hawfinches feeding on some cherry-trees in this neighbourhood: they were very shy, and could scarcely be approached within gun-shot. I succeeded in bringing down one, a fine male. A man living near the spot shot five at various times afterwards, two of which were young ones.—*A. Skinner.*

Variety of the Brown Linnet at Brighton.—A speckled variety of the above, with white tail and three white feathers in each wing, was taken near the Race-course on the 20th of November, and sold to Swaysland, of Queen's Road.—*T. W. Wonfor.*

Crossbills in Sussex.—Pratt the naturalist informs me two specimens, a male and female, were shot early in November, at Hurstpierpoint.—*Id.*

Crossbills near Faversham.—About the end of May I saw a quantity of these birds on some lofty fir-trees: I and a friend shot about twenty of various colours; the greater part of them were males. Some were in the beautiful red plumage. After a few days, these birds became very shy: I have had several brought to me since that time: the last I received—four birds, three of which were males—was on the 12th of January.—*A. Skinner.*

Variety of the Rook.—As I was walking round Chilham Park one day in the summer I perceived something black on the road, which proved to be a dead rook with a white throat besides the ordinary black plumage. This bird seemed to have been dead a day or two.—*Id.*

Great Black Woodpecker in Hants, unauthenticated.—The information sent to Mr. Gould as to the black woodpecker having been shot in Hampshire proves on investigation to be based on a wilful, bare-faced falsehood, showing how necessary it is to ascertain the real truth of what at first sight may appear unworthy of a doubt. Mr. Gould promised to investigate the fact before he admitted the Picus martius into the British Avifauna, as our readers will observe in my note in the last number of the 'Zoologist' (S. S. 1516). His doing so resulted in the following letter being sent to him by his former correspondent conveying the notice of the capture:—"Dec. 26, 1868. Sir,—I regret writing to you about the black woodpecker as Mr. —— told me he bought it in London Market, but *being so fresh he said, out of a joke, he shot it at Binstead.* I will be more careful for the future," &c., &c.—*Edward Hearle Rodd; Penzance, January* 11, 1869.

Great Spotted Woodpecker near Faversham.—I received an adult male specimen of the great woodpecker, in the summer, shot a mile from Faversham. I received a female specimen on the 2nd of November, shot by a man in Faversham churchyard.—*A. Skinner.*

Lesser Spotted Woodpecker at Faversham.—On the 13th of January I received an adult female specimen of the lesser spotted woodpecker, shot by a man in Faversham churchyard.—*Id.*

Late Swallow.—During yesterday and to-day a swallow has been constantly flying round and about my house and garden, as though with the intention of staying here. It has lost the right fork of its tail, suggesting to my mind the idea that it may have been shot at by some enthusiastic naturalist on its passage hither. Here at least it shall be safe.—*Philip O. Papillon; Lexden Manor, Colchester, December* 23, 1868.—*From the 'Field.'*

Variety of the Common Pheasant.—I have received two curious male specimens of this pheasant from a game-dealer in Faversham: they have a general plumage of cream-colour, besides the ordinary black markings.—*A. Skinner.*

Spoonbill at Benacre.—A specimen of the spoonbill was shot during the present January, at Benacre, in Suffolk, and will shortly be added to the rich collection of the Earl of Malmesbury.—*W. Hart and Son; West End, Christchurch.*

Bittern near Epworth.—I have just had a fine specimen of the bittern brought to me for preservation: it was shot on our marsh land near Epworth. Two or three have been shot in our neighbourhood during the last three or four years. About thirty years since this magnificent species was very abundant here, but the improved drainage has caused their visits to be few and far between. The bittern, in fact, I am sorry to say, is fast disappearing from amongst us.—*J. T. Gravil, jun.*

Bittern at Looe.—A bittern was seen in this neighbourhood last week.—*Stephen Clogg; East Looe, December* 26, 1868.

Avocet at Portsmouth.—During the present month of January a specimen of the avocet has been shot at Portsmouth, and is in the possession of Major Breton.—*W. Hart and Son; West End, Christchurch.*

Correction of an error: Parasite of Sabine's Snipe.—I have committed a signal mistake in stating the parasites of Sabine's and the common snipe to be distinct (Zool. S. S. 1511). They are precisely the same—an additional argument that Sabine's snipe is only a dark variety of the common species. It is a curious circumstance that out of about sixty parasites of various species examined by Mr. Cordeaux, many belonging to closely allied species, those of Sabine's and the common snipe are the only two identical.—*J. H. Gurney. jun.; Darlington Bank, Darlington.*

Pintailed Duck near Faversham.—A beautiful specimen of this rare bird was shot about five miles from Faversham, on the 15th of January: it came alone from the sea to some "saltings."—*A. Skinner.*

Nyroca Duck in Leadenhall Market.—On the 14th of January my father got a Nyroca in Leadenhall.—*J. H. Gurney, jun.*

The Longtailed Duck.—Mr. Stevenson notes the longtailed duck as rather abundant in his district (Zool. S. S. 1495). Of five that I have seen in the flesh this season only one has been a mature male, and it was shot near Alnwick.—*Id.*

Longtailed Duck near Lynn.—On the 17th of January I had a longtailed drake, in the flesh, from King's Lynn.—*Id.*

Summer Duck at Boultibrook.—Last month (November) a small flock of the summer duck (*Dendronessa Sponsa*, Linn.), of North America, settled on a small pond in my grounds: they did not appear wild, and remained until the following day, when, at a very early hour in the morning, my gardener (Mr. Weatherstone) saw them perched on some large oak trees, at the end of the pond. I have made inquiries to ascertain, if possible, where these ducks came from, but hitherto without result. There are some large ponds in this neighbourhood, where I think they may have been seen. There were seven specimens in the flock. I never allow any bird to be molested here, and the ducks took flight the next day.—*Harford J. Jones Brydges; Boultibrook, December* 29, 1868.

Summer Duck at Lymington.—Early in November last I purchased a bird I considered uncommon, which had been shot amongst other wild-fowl on the shores of the Solent. I could not discover what the bird was, until last week I found it answered to the description of the summer duck given in the 'Penny Cyclopædia' (vol. ix. p. 184). Will you kindly give me your opinion, in the 'Zoologist,' as to where it came from?—*John Wright; Lymington, December* 26, 1868.

[Several have been killed lately: it is generally supposed they have escaped from confinement.—*E. Newman.*]

Goosander near Bedale.—On the 27th of January I had a magnificent old male goosander, in its full maroon-coloured plumage, in the flesh, from Semmer Water, near Bedale.—*J. H. Gurney, jun.*

Sclavonian Grebe near Faversham.—Two of these birds were shot three miles from Faversham, on the 13th of December: one of these I received on the 14th, it was an adult male, in winter plumage. I was informed by the man who shot them that there were several of them together. The stomach contained sea-weeds.—*A. Skinner.*

Little Gull at Brighton.—Several little gulls have been shot at or near Brighton. One was shot on the Race-course by a lad after small birds, who thought it was a pigeon: this with another shot between Brighton and Shoreham are in the possession of Pratt, and two others shot near Shoreham are in the hands of Swaysland.—*T. W. Wonfor.*

Little Gull at Looe.—A little gull was shot here on the 17th of December: on that day, as I was walking through the street, I met a boy with the bird in his hand; he told me he was taking it to the birdstuffer, so I was satisfied that it was in the right road for preservation; but on going to have a further look at it, three or four hours after, I was surprised to find that the so-called birdstuffer had refused it because it was only a *small* gull, not worth stuffing. I immediately called at the boy's home, when I was told I should have it when the boy came in, he being from home when I called: in about an hour it was brought to me with both wings cut off close to the body, with an opening in the breast, and in a very dirty state, but by dint of much washing and sewing on the wings I have made a tolerable specimen of it. The person who shot it tells me there were a dozen or more flying about the mouth of the harbour at the same time, but, as he is altogether ignorant of Ornithology, I cannot vouch for the fact, but I do not think he would intentionally misinform me: he says he thought they were sea-swallows.—*Stephen Clogg.*

Kittiwake Gull in Faversham Creek.—On the 10th of November I received a good male specimen of the kittiwake gull, which was shot by a man in the creek.—*A. Skinner.*

Iceland Gull in Kingstown Harbour, County Dublin.—December 11, 1868. I have recorded the occurrence of an Iceland gull in this harbour on the 10th, but must record another to-day, noticed whilst walking on the West Pier: it is an older and much whiter bird than that last recorded. "It is a very rare species in Ireland; but two have occurred there" (Morris's 'British Birds'). Perhaps thirty have occurred to myself off the coast of Dublin in the last six years.—*H. Blake-Knox.*

PROCEEDINGS OF SOCIETIES.

ENTOMOLOGICAL SOCIETY.

January 4, 1869.—H. W. BATES, Esq., President, in the chair.

Additions to the Library.

The following donations were announced, and thanks voted to the donors:—'Transactions of the Linnean Society,' Vol. xxvi., Part 2; 'Journal of the Linnean Society,' Zoology, No. 44: presented by the Society. 'Proceedings of the Royal Society,' No. 104; by the Society. 'Memoires de la Société de Physique et d'Histoire Naturelle de Genève,' Vol. xix., Part 2; by the Society. Hewitson's 'Exotic Butterflies,' Part 69; by W. W. Saunders, Esq. 'The Entomologist's Annual,' for 1869; by the Editor. Newman's 'British Moths,' No. 25; by the Author. 'The Zoologist,' for January; by the Editor. 'The Entomologist's Monthly Magazine,' for January; by the Editors.

By purchase:—Gemminger and Von Harold, 'Catalogus Coleopterorum,' Vol. ii.

Election of Members.

W. F. Kirby, Esq., Assistant in the Museum of the Royal Dublin Society (previously an Annual Subscriber), and E. Holdsworth, Esq., of Shanghai, were elected Members.

Exhibitions, &c.

Mr. Bond exhibited two diminutive specimens of Vanessa Urticæ, about half the usual size of the butterfly; they were two out of fifty or more dwarfs, not all of the same brood of larvæ, which, owing probably to the extreme heat of 1868, had been developed with remarkable rapidity, having remained less than a week in the chrysalis state.

Mr. Bond also exhibited a dark variety of the female Apatura Iris, and a very pale variety of Hesperia Comma.

Mr. E. G. Meek exhibited specimens of Dianthœcia Barrettii, captured by Mr. Gregson, in Ireland.

Mr. W. C. Boyd exhibited a specimen of Crambus myellus, captured by Mr. Adam Boyd some time since near Blair Athol, and which had remained mixed in Mr. Boyd's collection with C. pinetellus, until his attention was called to it by the announcement at the previous Meeting.

The Secretary exhibited photographs of nests of Vespa Britannica and V. arborea, presented to the Society by Mr. John Hogg, by whom the nests were found at Norton, Durham.

Mr. F. Smith exhibited a series of drawings of bees and wasps and their respective nests, and a number of the actual nests, collected in India by Mr. Charles Horne.

Mr. Horne (who was present as a visitor) gave some interesting details on the habits of the insects. The species of bee which was kept by the natives was, he believed, the Apis dorsata. In the North-west Provinces, it was necessary to leave the key in every lock, or the cavity was pretty sure to be occupied by a Pelopæus: if a sheet of paper was left on a mantel-shelf, it would be fixed thereto by an inserted mud-cell; or a like cell might often be found interposed between a pillow and the bed; even a little hollow in the floor, in spite of the inevitable destruction of the nest, would be filled; and in one case he had known a nest to be placed on the edge of a door, and it was seven times crushed by the shutting of the door, and seven times renewed before the little bee could be induced to forsake the spot she had chosen. Some of the nests exhibited were placed in very singular positions; one, of a leaf-cutting bee, was in the handle or ear of a terra cotta vase, access being obtained through a small hole in the narrow lower end of the handle; another, belonging to a Pelopæus, and consisting of a single mud-cell, was attached to a man's signet or finger-ring the stone of which had fallen out, and was fastened to the metal by means of a coil or knot of mud passed through the hole where the stone had been; a third nest of a bee consisted of a spherical mass of cells which was found in the centre (filling up the whole hollow) of the nest of a mouse, which was suspended in grass.

Prof. Westwood mentioned that at Oxford he had found a mouse's nest in the centre of one of his bee-hives, surrounded by a number of headless bees.

Mr. Horne also exhibited a strong earthern cocoon, dug out of the ground, and containing a large species of Sternocera: he had frequently found the perfect beetle thus encased, and it was the regular habit of this species of Buprestidæ. (Compare the habit of Lucanus cervus, lately reported.)

Prof. Westwood exhibited drawings and gave some account of various remarkable insects, including (1) a species of Leptocorisa (Cimicidæ, Coreidæ) sent by Mr. Thwaites, from Ceylon, where it was very injurious to the rice crop, sucking the juices of the plant—it was probably identical with the local variety of Cimex varicornis which he (Prof. Westwood) had described under the name Bengalensis; (2) an Ichneumon and an Epeira, the larva of the former being an external parasite on the body of the spider; other instances of external parasitic larvæ were, Eulophus (Chalcididæ) on a willow-gall saw-fly, and larvæ of a Scolia on larvæ of the Lamellicorn beetle, Oryctes;

(3) a new species of Coleoptera from the Niger, referable to the genus Aprostoma of Guérin, with which it was suggested that both Mecedanum of Erichson and Gempylodes of Pascoe might probably be united; (4) a beautiful species of Lamiidæ, from the Zambesi; (5) a second species of the genus Ectrephes of Pascoe (Proc. Ent. Soc. 1866, p. xvi); and (6) a new genus in Count Mniszech's collection, allied to Rhyssodes, and intended to be described as Rhyssodina.

Mr. A. E. Eaton communicated the following note:—

"Dr. A. S. Packard, jun., has very kindly sent me a *separate* of a paper by him, On the Structure of the Ovipositor and Homologous parts in the Male Insect, from the Proc. Boston Soc. Nat. Hist. vol. xi. (Feb. 26, 1868), in which he has corrected his earlier observations. The result of his later investigations is to confirm M. Lacaze-Duthier's statement that 'les tarières des Névroptères sont semblables aux tarières des Hyménoptères," which his earlier conclusions had (as I showed in Trans. Ent. Soc. 1868, p. 143) contradicted; and the paper also shows in what way the French author came to be mistaken in supposing that the sting grew out from the ninth segment alone."

Mr. Frederick Smith read the following:—

On the Affinities of the Genus Sibyllina, of Westwood.

"At the Meeting of this Society on the 16th of November, Professor Westwood described, under the name Sibyllina ænigmatica, an insect that has for some years been standing nameless in various collections. I had, myself, after a somewhat cursory examination, referred it to the ants, and had placed it in the family Poneridæ. A few years ago I had an opportunity of submitting this insect to Dr. Nylander, who thought I was right in so doing, but I must admit he had only time to give it a very slight examination. Prof. Westwood (Tr. Ent. Soc. 1868, p. 329, Proc. p. xli.) has referred it to the Vespidæ, its position being indicated as near the genus Belonogaster, of Saussure.

"At the time when the paper was read, I expressed an opinion that it could not belong to the Vespidæ: I have therefore felt bound to examine the insect with a greater degree of attention, and have carefully and minutely investigated its structural peculiarities: the result has been, that I have changed my opinion as to the family to which it belongs, although I shall still be found to differ widely in that respect from Prof. Westwood, and also from Mr. Haliday, who once examined the insect, and determined that it belonged to the Sphegidæ, being in his opinion closely allied to the genus Pelopæus.

"Having expressed an opinion that it does not belong to the Vespidæ, it is incumbent upon me to give my reasons. In the first place, all true wasps, the social as well as the solitary species, have the anterior wings folded longitudinally, except when they are used in flight; in the genus Sibyllina they are not folded. In the next place, every true wasp has four submarginal cells, the fourth being very frequently incomplete, but in some species of the genera Belonogaster, Polistes, and also of the genus Vespa, among the social wasps, and in the solitary group, in the genera Zuthus, Rhynchium, Abispa and Synagris, the fourth cell is complete; but I know no species of wasp that has not three complete submarginal cells; the genus Sibyllina has only two. Then, every true wasp has three discoidal cells in the anterior wings; Sibyllina has only one. The prothorax in all the Vespidæ forms the upper anterior portion, and is prolonged backwards to the tegulæ of the wings; the prolongations also forming lateral portions of the upper surface: this is not the case in the genus Sibyllina. The only character which Sibyllina possesses in common with the Vespidæ is that of having lunate, or notched, eyes: this I regard as only a subsidiary character, being common to a vast number of Hymenopterous insects. We find the lunate eye in many species of the genera Mutilla, Scolia, Sapyga, Pemphredon and Philanthus: then again, among the Ichneumonidæ, it is found in species belonging to the genera Pimpla, Camploplex, Anomalon, Ophion and some others; this character therefore cannot be regarded as any strong evidence in favour of Sibyllina being a genus of Vespidæ. It is a fundamental character, distinguishing the social wasps, that the claws of the tarsi are all simple—in Sibyllina the claws of the posterior tarsi are toothed;—the solitary wasps are distinguished by having the claws of the tarsi dentate.

"After a very careful examination of the insect, I have come to the conclusion that Sibyllina belongs to the Ichneumonidæ.

"The first, and the strongest objection that can be urged against this opinion, will doubtless be that the antennæ are only twelve-jointed, and not, as in the generality of the Ichneumonidæ, multiarticulate: this is undoubtedly true, but there are genera of Ichneumonidæ having only twelve- and thirteen-jointed antennæ. Among the minute Ichneumons the genus Trioxys is found to have thirteen-jointed antennæ; and in Ephidrus, belonging to the same group, they are only twelve-jointed. In the next place, I believe every species of the larger group of Ichneumons, (I am not prepared to speak of the minute ones in that particular) has double-jointed trochanters: these joints in most of the genera and species are distinctly visible, but not universally so in the group; in some species belonging to the genus Exetastes, the second joint is retracted within the first, and is only partly visible; the same is the case in the genus Anomalon. I have carefully examined the structure of the legs of Sibyllina, and I find a second joint distinctly visible, quite as much so as in the Ichneumonideous genus Metopius. The antennæ of every wasp that I have seen are geniculate, in Sibyllina they are not. In addition to this, the prothorax is of the same structure as in Ophion and Anomalon; its ocelli are large and prominent, as in those genera, whilst in the Vespidæ they are much smaller, and usually more sunken than prominent. Another most remarkable peculiarity in the structure of Sibyllina, is the broadly-dilated tarsal joints, a character I believe nowhere to be found in the Vespidæ, but peculiarly characteristic of the species of the genus Anomalon. The abdomen of Sibyllina has the basal segment narrowed into a slender petiole; this is also characteristic of the genus Ophion and Anomalon. Then again, Sibyllina is furnished with a sting, or ovipositor; its structure is precisely the same as the sting or ovipositor of Ophion and Anomalon: in fact I can discover no external difference between the stings of Belonogaster, Vespa, Ophion and Anomalon; in each the sting tapers to a sharp point, and is simply a hollow tube, having a groove beneath, that in the wasp being, I presume, for the purpose of conveying poison into the wound made by piercing, and in the case of the Ichneumons for conveying the egg into the victim attacked.

"Place Sibyllina in any group of the Hymenoptera, and it will, as it were, stand alone; it has little affinity that I can discover, certainly it has no strong affinity, with any other known insect. But having pointed out those parts of its structure that agree with the same parts in the genera Ophion and Anomalon, I shall conclude by expressing my opinion that the genus Sibyllina should be referred to the Ichneumonidæ, and that its closest ally is the genus Anomalon."

Prof. Westwood thanked Mr. Smith for his careful investigation of the affinities of Sibyllina, and congratulated him upon having arrived at a conclusion identical with that of the American entomologist, Mr. Cresson, who had referred to the Ichneumons an insect which he (Prof. Westwood) believed to be the same as Sibyllina. At the same time he was scarcely prepared to admit that the insect is an Ichneumon. The two-jointed trochanters, upon which Mr. Smith placed considerable reliance, were by no means peculiar to the Ichneumons, and if the character existed in Sibyllina, it rather pointed in another direction; he (Prof. Westwood) however could not detect the second joint, though he had looked carefully for it. Mr. Smith had not noticed the diversity in the number of joints in the antennæ of the sexes, twelve in the male, thirteen in the female, which was very characteristic of the Aculeata.

The President suggested that Sibyllina might be the type of a group connecting the Vespidæ and Ichneumonidæ.

Papers read.

The following papers were read:—"On the Affinities of the Genus Sibyllina of Westwood," by Mr. F. Smith. (See above).

"Descriptions of Nine New Species of Buprestidæ," by Mr. Edward Saunders. Belonging to the genera Sternocera, Julodis, Catoxantha, Chrysaspis (n. g.), Psiloptera, Pseudhyperantha (n. g.), Hyperantha, and Acherusia (two).

Annual Meeting, January 25, 1869.—FREDERICK SMITH, Esq., Member of the Council, in the chair.

An Abstract of the Treasurer's Accounts for 1868 was read by Mr. S. J. Wilkinson, one of the Auditors, and showed a balance in favour of the Society of £78 16*s*. 0*d*.

The Secretary read the Report of the Council for 1868.

The following gentlemen were elected Members of the Council for 1869:—Messrs. H. W. Bates, Hon. Thomas De Grey, Dunning, Grut, M'Lachlan, Pascoe, Salvin, G. S. Saunders, F. Smith, Stainton, S. Stevens, A. R. Wallace and Wormald.

The following Officers for 1869 were afterwards elected:—President, Mr. H. W. Bates; Treasurer, Mr. S. Stevens; Secretaries, Messrs. Dunning and M'Lachlan; Librarian, Mr. E. W. Janson.

The President's Address (in the absence of Mr. Bates, whose official duties compelled his attendance elsewhere) was read by the Secretary.

A vote of thanks to the President for his services during the past year, with a request that the Address might be printed in the 'Proceedings,' was proposed by Mr. A. R. Wallace, seconded by Mr. Pascoe, and carried unanimously.

Thanks were also voted to the other Officers, and Members of the Council for 1868; and the votes were acknowledged by Mr. S. Stevens, Mr. Dunning and Mr. Janson.

Mr. M'Lachlan proposed, and Mr. W. C. Boyd seconded, a vote of thanks to the Pro-President for his conduct in the chair. This was also carried unanimously; and Mr. Frederick Smith made a suitable reply.—*J. W. D.*

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